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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4001
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RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 1290
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - US-IRAN TALKS - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Most Tuesday morning pagers gave top play to Monday's suicide of Agriculture Minister Matsuoka. The papers also front-paged US-Iran ambassador-level talks held at the Iraqi prime minister's office in Baghdad Monday, the first formal talks between the two countries since 1980.

¶1. "US, Iran Agree on Iraq's Stabilization, But Outlook for Improved Ties Unclear " Tehran correspondent Ando of the liberal Asahi wrote (5/29): "The US and Iran held direct talks Monday in Baghdad to discuss Iraq's stabilization. Though the Monday meeting was at the ambassadorial level, it was the first formal US-Iran talks since the two nations broke off diplomatic relations in 1980 following the hostage crisis at the US Embassy in Tehran. US and Iranian officials emerged from the meeting with a positive reaction, with Iran announcing that the next meeting will be held within one month in Iraq. Nonetheless, discussion at the Monday meeting was limited to Iraq-related issues, making it unclear whether the talks can open the way to discussing the Iranian nuclear standoff or improving US-Iran relations."

¶2. "Iran Trying to Change Hostile US Policy" Tehran correspondent Kudo of the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri reported (5/29): "Iran is sharply at odds with the US over its nuclear program and other issues. While under strong international pressure over the nuclear issue, Iranian officials attended Tehran's first formal talks with the US since the rupture of diplomatic relations in 1980. This indicates that Iran wants to use its influence in Iraq as leverage to have the US change its hostile policy toward Tehran. Iran's proposal for creating a framework involving the US, Iran, and Iraq demonstrates that Tehran wants to use its 'Iraq card' to

set up a permanent venue for negotiations."

SCHIEFFER